

Threat Advisory

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Water

Water Protection Task Force

February 7, 2003

EPA's Water Protection Task Force is providing the following information to water utilities to assist in their preparations for the newly announced Threat Level Orange:

- Suggested measures under Threat Level Orange
- Joint EPA/CDC Advisory

SUGGESTED MEASURES UNDER THREAT LEVEL ORANGE

EPA's Water Protection Task Force has compiled a list of suggestions from a number of water utilities to assist in preparations at the various Homeland Security Threat Levels. The suggestions described below pertain to the Threat Level Orange and are organized in the areas of detection, preparedness, prevention, and protection. Water utilities should consider whether the following measures are appropriate for their facilities:

Suggested Measures

I. Detection:

- Confirm that county and state health officials will inform water utilities of any potential waterborne illnesses.

II. Preparedness:

- Post *daily* reminders for staff and contractors of the THREAT LEVEL ORANGE; along with a reminder of what events constitute security violations.
- Ensure employees are fully aware of the emergency response communication protocols so that appropriate notifications can be made quickly in the event of an incident. Consider the following list of organizations to be notified:
 - local law enforcement
 - local FBI Field Office
 - National Response Center (800-424-8802)
 - State and local emergency management organizations
 - Governor's office
 - EPA CID Special Agent in Charge (SAC)
 - other associated system authorities (wastewater, water)
 - local government officials
 - state/local health, water, and/or environmental departments
 - critical care facilities
 - employees
 - EMS and fire department as deemed necessary
 - Consider when to notify customers and what notification to issue

(Additional information is available in the ***Model Emergency Response Guidelines*** at www.epa.gov/safewater/security/)

- Evaluate the need for organizing an emergency operations center.

III. Prevention:

- Discontinue tours and prohibit public access to all operational facilities.
- Consider requesting increased law enforcement surveillance, particularly of critical assets and otherwise unprotected areas.

IV. Protection:

- Ensure water treatment/production facility is staffed at all times.
 - Consider the need for additional security measures needed for surface water reservoirs.
 - Limit mission critical facility access to essential employees and contractors.
 - Increase security patrol activity to the maximum level sustainable and ensure tight security in the vicinity of mission critical facilities. Consider varying the schedule of security patrols.
 - Prosecute intruders, trespassers, and those detained for tampering to the fullest extent possible under applicable laws.
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Joint EPA/CDC Advisory

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ADVISORY

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Today, the Department of Homeland Security upgraded the Homeland Security Advisory System from yellow level (elevated risk of terrorist attack) to orange level (high risk of terrorist attack).

While there are no data to indicate that water has been specifically targeted, our nation's water infrastructure remains at risk to terrorist attacks, or acts intended to substantially disrupt the ability of a water system to provide a reliable supply of water. Therefore, public health agencies and water utilities are encouraged to continue to work together, keep each other informed of any unusual activities, and confirm the proper operation of notification channels in emergency response plans.

Public health agencies should immediately notify local water utilities and the state's drinking water administrator in the event of an unusual number of cases of gastrointestinal illnesses or other indications of illness that may suggest water contamination by a biological, chemical or radiological agent.

Water utilities should immediately notify public health agencies 24/7 emergency operations number, and the state's drinking water administrator in the event of specific threats received at a water facility, customer complaints in water quality, or if circumstances lead the utility to believe that the water has been or will be contaminated with a biological, chemical or radiological agent.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issue this advisory jointly.
